

Mount Vernon Gazette

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MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION PAPER

AUGUST 27, 2009

Economy Has Poor's Safety Net Fraying

Local groups serve 20,000 low-income people in Route 1 corridor.

BY GERALD A. FILL
THE GAZETTE

Fairfax County is one of the richest counties in the U.S. on a per capita income basis, according to National Association of Counties statistical data. Yet significant and persistent poverty exists within a few minutes drive from the most affluent neighborhoods in the southeastern part of the county.

The South County Leadership Coalition, a group of non-profits serving needy individuals and families in the Route 1 Corridor, describes the big hurdle in convincing residents and businesses to accept the presence of poverty so near. Most of the organizations estimate a 30-50 percent increase in demand for food, shelter, and other services since the recession began.

"People in Fairfax County don't think of our community as having homeless problems but it does exist and in large numbers," said Pam Michell, longtime New Hope Housing executive director. "There are problems out there facing the needy, but there are also solutions ... we need to convince people to donate money, or in-kind donations such as food or to volunteer time. If they will do so we are organized to deliver the needed services and meet the demand."

"One of the most important services we provide to needy individuals and families who come to us, many of whom have never be-

fore had to seek assistance of any kind, is hope," said Cynthia Hull, executive director of United Community Services (UCM). "Hope that their desperate circumstances will change; hope that someone will care enough to help; hope that all is not lost and that better days are ahead."

WHO PROVIDES assistance to the needy in the route 1 corridor?

"One of the most important services we provide to needy individuals and families who come to us, many of whom have never before had to seek assistance of any kind, is hope."

— Cynthia Hull,
executive director,
United Community Services

What kind of assistance do these organizations provide? What are their most pressing needs?

United Community Ministries, Inc. (UCM)

7511 Fordson Road
Alexandria, Virginia 22306
www.ucmagency.org
703-768-7106

Executive Director: Cynthia Hull

of Employees: 85

Clients Served in FY 2009: 12,500 individuals; an increase of 65% over 2008

Type assistance provided:

Food Assistance: 350 Tons annually

Other Assistance: Clothes; Back to School Supplies; Eviction and utility cut-off prevention assistance; employment counseling, job training (including computer literacy training); child care; tutoring; domestic violence

UCM Prepares For Back To School

More than 716 backpacks have been filled with grade appropriate supplies and are ready to be distributed the upcoming weeks to students in the Mount Vernon area. Donations for the backpacks and supplies came from local churches, community organizations and corporations. Volunteers from local schools — Bishop Ireton, Carl Sandburg, West Potomac High School and Bryant — helped sort and prepare the packs.

Volunteers Molly, Kate and Rebecca finish up with the backpacks before joining the staff in the food pantry. Volunteers not pictured are: Jose, Adrianna, Aaron, Andrew, Philip and Bau.



PHOTO BY
LOUISE KRAFFT/
GAZETTE

assistance (transitional housing, homeless families, mental illness or substance abuse); and many other services.

UCM High Priority Needs: Financial assistance; food; truck with a lift; two walk-in commercial freezers; refrigerator; telephone systems; computers; volunteers; and more.

Home for the Holidays Fundraising event: Nov. 6. Public is welcome to participate. Additional information available on the Web site.

Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC)

9518 Richmond Highway; P.O. Box 154
Lorton, Virginia 22199
www.lortonaction.org
703-339-5580

Executive Director: Stephen Rorke
Deputy Director: Maryam Ulomi

Employees: 11
Clients Served Annually: 3,225 individuals in FY 2009; up from 2,750 in 2008

Types of Assistance:

Food Assistance: 144 Tons distributed in FY 2009

Other Assistance: Clothing; Eviction prevention (emergency rent assistance); utility cut-off assistance; back to school supplies, Holiday food assistance; medical assistance; counseling, housing referral, ESL tutoring, computer tu-

toring, etc.

LCAC High Priority Needs: Financial assistance; food; volunteers for a variety of activities, including food distribution.

Deputy Director Maryam Ulomi: "The current volume of clients seeking assistance through LCAC has increased by 40 percent over the previous year. Our food requirements have increased but the

SEE 540 TONS, PAGE 3

Joblessness

According to the most recently reported Labor Department figures, the jobless rate is at 9.4 percent nationally; 26 states report increases in jobless rates; in Virginia the current jobless rate hovers at 6.4 percent as compared to 4 percent in 2008.

A recent survey of the Route 1 corridor service providers universally confirms significant new numbers of jobless people coming through their doors in the past year and further straining resources needed to help them.

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540 Tons of Food Aid — Given Here

FROM PAGE 1

amount of donated food has dropped. We are meeting the increased demand by tapping into our reserves but even that is depleted.”

Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services, Inc. (GSH)

8305 Richmond Highway #17B
P.O.Box 15096
Alexandria, Virginia 22309
www.goodhousing.org
703-768-9404

Executive Director: Shannon Michael Steene

Employees: 11

Clients Served: 778 in FY 2009, up from 654 in FY 2008

Core Mission: To reduce homelessness, promote self sufficiency, increase community support.

Good Shepherd housing has access to 68 housing units (30 GSH-owned, 38 rented or subleased). The primary focus of GSH effort is to enable qualified individuals and families to move temporarily into these housing units to avoid being homeless. Typically, the clients they serve are employed but unable to obtain a lease on their own, due to poor credit or another reason. If they are unable to obtain a lease, they may end up in a homeless shelter. GSH helps to prevent that from happening. They also provide credit counseling, financial management counseling, and refer clients to such other services as may be required to help them to “stabilize their housing situation,” according to Steene. The average length of stay in the GSH housing units is two years. If, however, an applicant for their services has no job and cannot afford to pay rent they are referred to one of the local shelters for help.

GSH High Priority Needs: Financial assistance; volunteers needed in the following areas: legal, real estate, financial, marketing, communications.

New Hope Housing, Inc.

8407-E Richmond Hwy.
Alexandria, Virginia 22309
www.newhopehousing.org
703-799-2293

Executive Director: Pam Michell
Employees: 100

Clients Served annually: 822, including 138 children; on any given night over 200 individuals find hope, hospitality, and shelter. New Hope operates six shelter programs which provide 106 beds year round (45 for families; 69 for single adults), plus 47 additional beds during the winter months).

According to Pam Michell: “There are currently 112 families county-wide that are homeless and

on a three-month wait list for shelter.”

High Priority New Hope Housing Needs: Financial assistance; volunteers to help providing meals to residents, tutoring, supervise children’s activities in the evening, and much more.

In-kind donation needs include: towels and twin sheets, vacuum cleaners, over the counter meds, gift certificates to local department stores and grocery stores, and much more.

An upcoming fundraiser, Help the Homeless Walkathon, needs participants and volunteers to manage the walkathon. Volunteers are needed to set up a miniwalk at one’s faith community, sponsor public school walkers, or get a place of business involved in sponsorship or team walking. Walks are being held from September through October, leading up to a BIG Walk on Nov. 21. This Walkathon benefits Good Shepherd Housing, United Community Ministries, and New Hope Housing.

Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church

8220 Russell Road
Alexandria, Virginia 22309
www.risinghopeumc.org
703-360-1976

Senior Pastor Keary Kincannon
Executive Director: Laura Derby

Employees: 4 full-time; 13 part-time

Assistance Provided:

Food Assistance: 5,000 unduplicated family visits for 2009; estimate approximately one ton of food per week is handed out to approximately 300-350 families (50 tons annually)

Other assistance provided: Eviction prevention, clothing, job referral, job training, family and employment counseling, ESL tutoring, after school programs for children and youth, hypothermia outreach program, emergency housing referrals, holiday gift baskets, back to school supplies, etc.

A central part of the Mission’s effort is Christian prayer, studying the Bible, attending church, Sunday school. Kincannon, the founder of the Mission in 1996, and a native of Mt. Vernon, said, “Our greatest contribution is to provide those who seek our help a faith-based community who cares for them in their time of need.”

Rising Hope Needs: Financial assistance, food, volunteers for a variety of activities.

OTHER IMPORTANT Route 1 Corridor organizations providing



Cynthia Hull, executive director, United Community Ministries, Inc.



Shannon Michael Steene, executive director, Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services, Inc.



The Rev. Keary Kincannon, Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church



Pam Michell, executive director, New Hope Housing, Inc.



Maryam Ulomi, deputy director, Lorton Community Action Center

assistance to the needy include: **Fairfax County Government**, Telly Whitfield, regional director, Human Services, South County area

Responsibilities: Increase access to county services such as family and recreation services, after school care, and to integrate services across county departments
Telephone #: 703-704-6730

Fairfax County Government Coordinated Services Planning: 703-222-0880. This telephone number is a “front door to Fairfax county government services or referral to non-profit services,” according to Whitfield.

Progreso Hispano

4100 Mohawk Lane
Alexandria, Virginia 22309
www.progreso-hispano.org
703-799-8830

Executive Director: Cristina Lamar-Schoendorf

Services: Immigration counseling; Spanish language translation services; ESL classes; computer literacy classes, citizenship classes.

Clients Served annually: 1,100
Employees: 3
Needs: Financial assistance, IT volunteers, tutors, pro-bono attorneys.

Beth-El

Domestic Violence Counseling, referral services.
Executive Director: Kari Warren
www.bethelhebrew.org

Kiononia

Executive Director: Amy Lopez:
703-971-1991

Services Provided: Food assistance, clothing.

Brain Injury Services, Inc.

8136 Old Keene Mill Road
Suite B 102
Springfield, VA 22152
Executive Director: Karen Brown
703-451-8881
www.braininjurysvcs.org

Services: comprehensive case management, job training, independent living skills training, pediatric case management and support assistance, counseling and referral services.

Employees: 3
Clients served annually: 538
High Priority Needs: Financial assistance, fund-raising advice and assistance, marketing and communications volunteers, volunteers to partner and support clients.

Fund Raising: Sixth Annual Kit Callahan’s Miracle Mile 10 K Run/Walk and Fun Run. Sept. 27, George Mason University, www.kitsmiraclemile.org

Housing & Community Services of Northern Virginia, Inc.

Executive Director: Irma Garcia, 703-372-5440
Housing Counselor: Thelma Brown
www.hcsnv.org

Services provided: housing counseling; eviction prevention, utility cut-off prevention, holiday gift assistance, rental advisory services, credit advisory assistance, and foreclosure prevention services.

Employees: 4
Clients served annually: 250.

PHOTOS BY GERALD A. FILL/THE GAZETTE



PHOTOS BY LOUISE KRAFFT/GAZETTE

The Rev. Keary Kincannon smiles as Road Diva president Frankie Lowery-Tomlinson, "Torch," says hello to three-month-old Austin.



Thomas Ethan Walls III beams with delight as he finds a backpack with his favorite hero, Spiderman.

Back To School at Rising Hope

The Rev. Keary C. Kincannon, pastor of Rising Hope Mission Church, the church staff and volunteers welcomed a few hundred families and their school age children on Saturday, Aug. 22, into the church for Back To School supplies and new shoes. The Samaritans brought boxes of size-sorted new shoes and socks for the children and their parents. One room was designated for

sizing feet; another for washing and fitting new shoes.

Afterwards the families proceeded upstairs for a backpack with school supplies. The church staff and volunteers also set up games and refreshments for the families in the parking lot. The Northern Virginia and D.C. chapters of the Road Divas joined the volunteers for the distribution.



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Photo by
Jenny Rulley

A Top Consumer-Rated Bank — Washington Consumers Checkbook Magazine



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703-768-7730

rex.reiley@rmxtalk.com



NEW LISTING

Alex/Wessynton \$795,000
3406 Wessynton Way

Large Beautiful 5BR, 3BA Contemporary Colonial on a spectacular .6 acre wooded lot. 3 finished lvls, numerous upgrades including a completely renovated kit & master bath. Bedroom & full remodeled bath on mn lvl along with a wall of windows overlooking a large koi pond & beautiful in-ground pool. One of Wessynton's most unique & treasured properties. Community pool, tennis court & hiking trail. A boat launch which allows easy access to the Potomac River. Minutes to Ft. Belvoir, Old Town, Huntington Metro, National Airport, Pentagon or D.C.



NEW LISTING

Alex/Mt. Vernon \$949,900
9428 Mount Vernon Circle

Spectacular all brick Colonial on a quiet cul-de-sac in prestigious water front community Mt. Vernon on the Potomac. Main Level: Den/Study, LR, DR, totally renovated Kitchen (granite, top of line appliances, ceramic tile flr), Breakfast rm & sun rm. 4 spacious bedrooms & large unfin basement w/side entrance. Beautiful in-ground pool w/separate heated Jacuzzi. Superb landscaping. Access to dock & private slip-boaters haven! 5 min to Ft. Belvoir, 15 min to Old Town, 25 min to Ntl Airport.



Alex./Mount Vernon \$529,900
9326 Craig Avenue

Large brick 5 BR, 3 BA split w/2-car garage on a .4 acre lot in lovely Mt. Vernon area w/lots of trees. 2 fireplaces, energy efficient replacement windows, beautiful refinished hdwd floors on main level, new carpeting, landscaped fenced rear lot w/huge deck off sunroom addition, freshly painted interior & exterior. Superbly priced so renovate kitchen/baths to your desire. Easy commute to Ft. Belvoir, Alex, Old Town, D.C./Pentagon.



Alex./Mount Vernon \$619,900
9005 Nomini Lane

Large, stately Colonial w/2-car garage on quiet cul-de-sac. Beautifully updated kitchen opens to breakfast area & family room w/fireplace. Gorgeous hdwd flrs. Huge bedrooms. Spacious master bedroom w/lg dressing area & walk-in closet. Private, landscaped backyard w/new exquisite patio-great for entertaining. Unfinished basement offers ample storage. Scenic commute along G.W. Parkway—Ft. Belvoir, Old Town, Ntl. Airport, D.C. & Pentagon.



Alex./Stratford \$559,900
8716 Linton Lane

Lovely 4BR, 2.5 BA Colonial w/brick front & carport. Very competitively priced in mid 500s. This is not a short sale or bank owned. Family room w/fireplace off the kitchen. Hardwood floors on the main & upper levels w/partial, unfinished basement which can be finished off or left as a workshop/storage area. Just down the street from Ft. Hunt Elem. Minutes to Ft. Belvoir & Huntington Metro.



Alex/Woodlawn Terrace \$239,900
8214 Ackley Street

Charming Cape Cod on a large, fenced .25 acre lot. Beautifully updated kitchen and baths. Nice addition with family room and workshop. Shows very well. Sold as is. 3 minutes to Ft. Belvoir, 15 minutes to Metro and Old Town, Alex. Short Sale, subject to third party approval.



UNDER CONTRACT

5704 Olde Mill Court



UNDER CONTRACT

1736 Rhodes Street

For more information:
www.RexReiley.com

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